

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

The final office action dated July 26, 2007 made the following assertions:


- Claim 5 is objected for antecedent basis;
- Claims 8, 13, 17-18 and 20 are objected for failure to define N;
- Claims 1-7, 10-11, and 13-19 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Mueller (US Pub 2003/0204542) in view of Gardner (US 5,805,619);
- Claims 2-3 and 12 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Mueller, Gardner and Boerstler (US 6,353,369);
- Claims 20-21 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as obvious over Mueller, and Harnden (US Pub. 2003/0069009); and
- Claims 8-9 are allowable if amended to overcome the objections.

Claim 8 is amended to recite that N is an integer greater than one as suggested by the Examiner. The objection to claim 8 and its dependent claim 9 is seen to be overcome, and those claims are now in allowance per the final office action. Claim 5 is also amended to overcome the objection for antecedent basis.

Claims 1, 7, 13-15, 17-18 and 20-21 are canceled herein. Dependency of claims 2, 4 and 10-12 are changed to depend from allowable claim 8, and an element is deleted from claims 2 and 12 that is already recited in claim 8. Remaining claims 3 and 5-6 depend from respective intervening claims 2 and 4, each of which now depends from allowable claim 8. Therefore, each of claims 2-6 and 8-12 are seen to be in condition for allowance.

Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested to put the claims in condition for issue. The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and objections and pass claims 2-6 and 8-12 to issue. The undersigned representative welcomes the opportunity to resolve any matters that may remain, formal or otherwise, via teleconference at the Examiner's discretion.

Respectfully submitted:



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October 15, 2007
Date



Appl. No. 10/690,898
mdt. Dated October 15, 2007
Reply to Office Action of July 26, 2007

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

10-15-07
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